REMARKS

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5, 10-21, 23 and 24 stand "rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by" United States Patent Application Publication No. US2002/0034977A1 (Burns et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2003/0078094A1 (Gatto et al.). Clarification is requested. The rejection seems to be one made under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) and not 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as unpatentable over Burns et al., Gatto et al. and U.S. Patent No. 5,505,461 (Bell et al.).

Claim Amendments

The claims have been further amended to distinguish over the cited references.

Applicants' Invention

Applicants' invention, in one configuration, is directed to a service center coupled to a gaming network and to an automatic teller network. The service center includes a player identifier structured to determine if a user as an authorized holder of a player account on the gaming network. The service center further includes a ticket reader and a verifier coupled to the player identifier and the ticket reader. The verifier is structured to validate a ticket, issued by a gaming machine and presented by the user at the service center, of an authorized holder of a player account that is inserted into the ticket reader. The service center also includes a payment dispenser structured to eject from the service center an amount of value only if the ticket of an authorized holder of a player account is validated.

Applicants' invention, in another configuration, is directed to a method of servicing a player account at a service center coupled to a gaming network on which a plurality of player accounts are stored. The method comprises establishing a connection to the gaming network and accepting an identification of the user. Information from the identification is compared to user data stored on the gaming network to determine if the user is an authorized holder of a player account. The user is authorized when the information matches the stored user data. A ticket issued by a gaming machine is accepted from the user at the service center. Data from the ticket is compared to ticket data stored on the gaming network. Something of value is provided to the user only if the data from the ticket matches the stored ticket data and the user is an authorized

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holder of a player account. A data connection to an ATM network is established, and money is transferred via the data connection from an account on the ATM network to the player account of the authorized user.

The Cited Art
Burns et al.

Burns et al. is directed to a coinless gaming system 10. The system includes a host central processing unit (CPU) 100 and a series of gaming machines 200. The play of a gaming machine is controlled by internal software 202 in the gaming machine. (¶ 38). A gaming machine may generate cash-out slips. (¶ 44). A gaming machine may accept paper currency, free play coupons and cash-out slips. (¶43). A cash-out slip from one machine may be accepted by another machine. (¶45).

The gaming machines include a paper currency reader 204 for detecting the validity and value of currency. (¶ 39). The gaming machines also include a bar code reader 206 for reading a bar code on a ticket. (¶41). In one embodiment, a bar code printer 208 is used to print bar codes on cash-out slips. The CPU 100 generates the bar code which represents the monetary value of the credit stored in a particular gaming machine along with a randomly generated number to permit the CPU 100 to verify the validity and unique identification of the cash-out slip. This is necessary since the cash-out slip generated by a bar code printer of one machine is capable of being inserted into a bar code reader of another machine. (¶45). Thus, the machines do not need to use coins. (¶11).

The gaming machines may also include a player identification reader 210. A reader 210 is capable of reading a room key or a specially encoded identification card for identifying a player using a gaming machine. The identification card permits the CPU 100 to keep track of a player and the amount of time played by the identified player. The identification card is not intended to provide the player with credit so the concern over the security of the card is not significant. (¶47). The CPU 100 stops tracking the player when a cash out slip is generated. Also, once a player has inserted an identification card into a gaming machine, that player can then be tracked by the insertion of any cash-out slip generated by the gaming machine for that player. The player would not have to insert the identification card into a gaming machine as long as the player has the cash-out slip. (¶19). The reader 210 input may also be a keypad which a player would use to enter a number or some other means of identification. (¶48).

The gaming system 10 also includes one or more change stations 300 or ATMs 500. (¶49). The change stations include a second paper currency reader 302, a second bar code reader

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304, and a second bar code printer 306. The second currency reader, the second bar code reader and the second bar code printer are the same as used in the gaming machines. The change stations also include a currency dispenser 308 so that when a cash-out slip is inserted into the bar code reader 306, paper currency and coins can be dispensed directly to the user. (¶50).

Gatto et al.

Gatto et al. is directed to a cashless gaming system 700 in a local area network 704. The network includes gaming machines 600 and ATMs 500. The network is controlled by a server 702. (¶39).

In operation, an ATM 500 prints a coded ticket 100 that bears at least both a human readable verification code 106 and a machine-readable code 108. The coded ticket is dispensed to a player. The player then can take the coded ticket to a gaming machine and use it to initiate game play. If the player decides not to play the gaming machine, he may present the printed coded ticket back to the ATM and obtain his money back. (¶41).

Bell et al.

Bell et al. is directed to a method that eliminates the need to prepare a W2-G Form every time a payout exceeds a predetermined IRS threshold. Instead, this method automatically maintains the information required for an attendant to prepare a single W2-G Form at the end of a gaming session. (Col. 1, lines 59-64).

Applicants' Invention Would Not Have Been Obvious

Three criteria must be met to establish obviousness. First, the prior art must provide one of ordinary skill in the art with a suggestion or motivation to modify or combine the teachings of the references relied upon in rejecting the claims. Second, the prior art must provide one of ordinary skill in the art with a reasonable expectation of success. Third, the prior art, either alone or in combination, must teach or suggest each and every limitation of the rejected claims. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed invention, as well as the reasonable expectation of success, must come from the prior art and not from Applicants' disclosure. If any one of these criteria is not met, a case of obviousness is not established. Also, some articulated reasoning with rational underpinnings must be provided to support a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

The combination of Burns et al. and Gatto et al. does not result in Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been made out.

Initially, it is noted that the obviousness rejection of the claims was based on the combination of Burns et al. and Gatto et al. However, the explanation of the rejection also

referred to Bell et al. and U.S. Patent No. 4,699,730 (Small et al.). (Office Action of June 13, 2008, ¶4). Is the rejection also based on these references? Clarification is requested.

In any event, Burns et al., as called for, for instance, by claim 1, does not disclose a service center coupled to a gaming network and to an automatic teller network wherein the service center has a player identifier structured to determine if a user as an authorized holder of a player account. Additionally, Burns et al. does not disclose a service center having a verifier coupled to the player identifier and the ticket reader, and structured to validate a ticket, issued by a gaming machine and presented by the user at the service center, of an authorized holder of a player account.

In Burns et al., the player identification reader 210 is part of a player tracking system of the gaming machine 200. The change stations or service centers 300 do not include any sort of player identifier. As such, the service centers 300 could not determine if a user as an authorized holder of a player account.

The cash-out slips of Burns et al. include a bar code used to determine a value of the credit associated with a cash-out slip. The bar code along with a randomly generated number allow the validity and the identity of the cash-out slip to be determined.

The Burns et al. system, however, does not require the bearer of the cash-out slip to be an authorized holder of a player account such that something of value is provided by the service center to the bearer only if the ticket of an authorized holder is validated. Any user, whether authorized or not, may receive value for a cash-out slip at a change station 300 if the cash-out slip has not previously been paid. That is, if the cash-out slip is valid, its value is paid to its bearer. (¶ 0049). As taught by Burns et al., the "Cashiers Stations would not have any gaming functions. . . . the Cashiers Station would pay players the value of the cash out slips." (¶ 0020).

Gatto et al. does not cure these deficiencies of Burns et al. Indeed, in Gatto et al., if "the server 702 does give the ATM 500 authorization to dispense money to the player (or to any holder or bearer of the coded ticket 100), the ATM 500 may dispense an amount that is less than or equal to the amount of the player's credit balance...." (¶0045).

Thus, like Burns et al., Gatto et al. does not require that prior to payment a determination be made that a bearer of a coded ticket 100 is an authorized holder of an account. Rather, the coded ticket 100 of Gatto et al. is like a lottery ticket which is redeemable by any holder or bearer of that ticket. (¶0034).

The coded ticket 100 may be printed at an ATM 500. The ticket includes, as noted, a human-readable verification code 106 and a machine-readable code 108. Any credit balance on the ticket can be redeemed at an ATM 500. During this process, a scanner of the ATM reads and

decodes the machine-readable code 108, and a player manually enters the human-readable verification code 106. The server 702 then authenticates the coded ticket by matching the two entered codes with previously stored codes. If there is a match, the credit balance associated with the coded ticket may be paid by the ATM. (¶0044).

The bearer of the coded ticket 100 is not identified as an authorized holder of an account associated with the ticket. Rather, any holder of the ticket can redeem it. (¶0008, 0045). That is, the server maintains "a unique account corresponding to the machine-readable code and the human-readable verification code, the account storing information indicative of the amount of money to dispense to the holder of the coded ticket". (¶0017).

Further, the subject matter of claim 4 would not have been obvious in view of the combination of Burns et al, Gatto et al. and Bell et al. for at least the reasons discussed above.

Therefore, it is submitted that Applicants' claimed invention would not have been obvious in view of Burns et al. and Gatto et al., either alone or in combination with other references.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all the claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of the claims at the earliest possible date is requested.

If prosecution of this application can be assisted by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' undersigned attorney at (510) 663-1100.

If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this amendment (including any fees due for an extension of time), such fees may be charged to Deposit Account No. 504480 (Order No. IGT1P327).

Dated: October 23, 2008   Respectfully submitted,
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